

BRIAN PULIDO'S

# Lady Death

10<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY



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 AVATAR

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**T**O KNOW HER STORY IS TO  
KNOW A WOMAN CURSED.

**B**UT TO WATCH HER, ONE  
WOULD NEVER KNOW...

**S**TEAMY.

**R**EMOTE.


**E**LEGANT.

NO ONE CAN KNOW  
THE GLORY I FEEL AS  
EACH AND EVERY  
ONE OF THEM  
DIE!

SUCH  
SWEET  
REVENGE.

I'VE WAITED AN  
ETERNITY FOR THIS  
TIME TO COME.

**S**HE'S THE QUEEN OF ALL THAT IS  
DEAD AND DYING, THE INCOM-  
PARABLE, UNFORGETTABLE  
LADY DEATH.



MMMMMMMM. ALL THIS  
DEATH AND DESTRUCTION...  
IT CALMS ME.

ONE DAY ALL LIFE ON THE  
PLANET WILL **CEASE**, AND  
FINALLY MY ENDLESS  
SUFFERING WILL END.

ALL BECAUSE OF YOU,  
MY YOUNG CHAMPION.

ALL BECAUSE  
OF YOU, **EVIL**  
**ONE**.

WHO DARES ?!

LADY  
DEATH?

MILADY, I DID NOT MEAN  
TO FRIGHTEN YOU...





FRIGHTEN  
ME?



FEAR?

I DON'T KNOW THE  
MEANING OF THE WORD,  
YOU IMBECILE !

eeeeek





THEN AGAIN... THERE WAS A TIME I DID.

I WAS A YOUNG GIRL THEN. HOW LONG AGO, IT SEEMS.

TEN YEARS AGO TODAY, YOU DIED MOTHER. YOU WERE THE LUCKY ONE. I ENVY YOU.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE NEAR HIM. THANK GOD HE IS AWAY ON ONE OF HIS BLOODY CAMPAIGNS.



LORD KNOWS WHAT HE'D DO IF HE FOUND ME HERE.

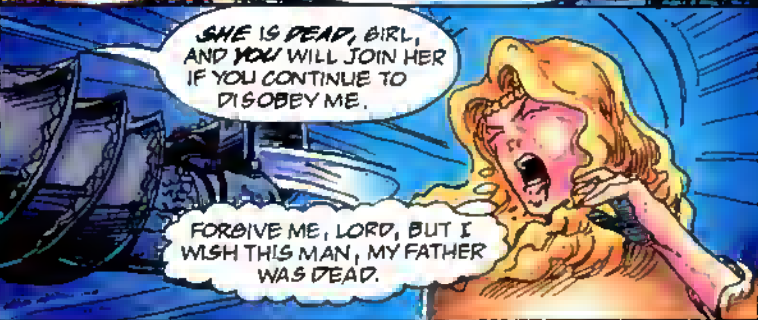
OH NO...



NOPE, YOU DISOBEIENT BITCH! I'VE ORDERED YOU NOT TO COME HERE, GIRL!

YOU'VE TRIED MY PATIENCE ONE TIME TOO MANY!

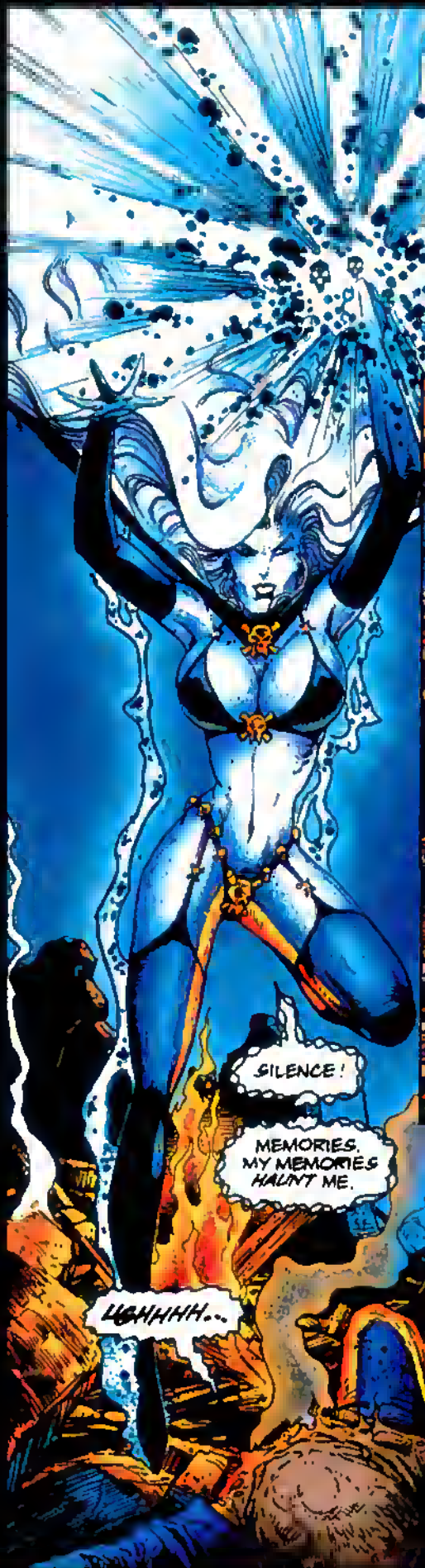
MATTHIAS... FATHER. PLEASE, I MEAN NO HARM. I ONLY WANTED TO BE WITH HER.



SHE IS DEAD, GIRL, AND YOU WILL JOIN HER IF YOU CONTINUE TO DISOBEY ME.

FORGIVE ME, LORD, BUT I WISH THIS MAN, MY FATHER WAS DEAD.





LORD  
MATTHIAS!

GREETINGS LOYAL  
PEOPLE. WE HAVE NOW  
YET ANOTHER  
CAMPAIGN!



MY SON! MY SON!  
WHERE IS HE,  
LORD MATTHIAS?

I REGRET TO SAY,  
YOUR SONS DIED IN  
BATTLE. BUT DO NOT  
WORRY, THEY WILL BE  
HAILED AS NOBLEMEN.



IT IS ALWAYS  
THIS WAY! WHEN  
WILL IT END?

WHEN THERE ARE NO  
MORE MEN LEFT TO WAGE  
MATTHIAS' INFERNAL WAR!

SILENCE!

MEMORIES.  
MY MEMORIES  
HAUNT ME.

UGHHHH...





LATER THAT NIGHT.



HA HA HA HA HA





I CONJURE THEE HERE,  
BEFORE ME, IN VISIBLE  
SHADOW! I CALL TO THEE!  
ILLUMINATORS OF DARKNESS,  
DESTRUCTORS OF LIGHT, I  
CALL TO THEE! BY THE  
NAME WHICH I WAS GIVEN,  
I ASK THY GATE TO  
OPEN! OPEN TO ME!



YES! FEED ON THE SOULS  
OF MY FALLEN SOLDIERS,  
LORDS OF THE DARK WAYS!  
FEED WELL!



YOU ARE TRUE TO  
YOUR WORDSSSS,  
MATTHIAS.

WITH THESE  
SOULS, WE SHALL  
BUILD AN ARMY TO  
VANQUISH LUCIFER  
HIMSELF!

YOUR LOYALTY  
WILL SECURE YOU  
A PLACE AMONG  
THE PRINCES  
OF HELL!



OH  
LORD IN  
HEAVEN!



AWAY  
GIRL!

FEED LIKE THE  
BLOATED PIGS YOU ARE!  
YOU THINK ME TO BE YOUR  
SLAVE, THAT I DESIRE A  
PLACE AMONG YOU!

WE'LL SOON SEE  
WHO RULES IN HELL!





WAS LAST NIGHT  
REAL? WAS MY FATHER  
TRULY CONJURING  
DEMONS?

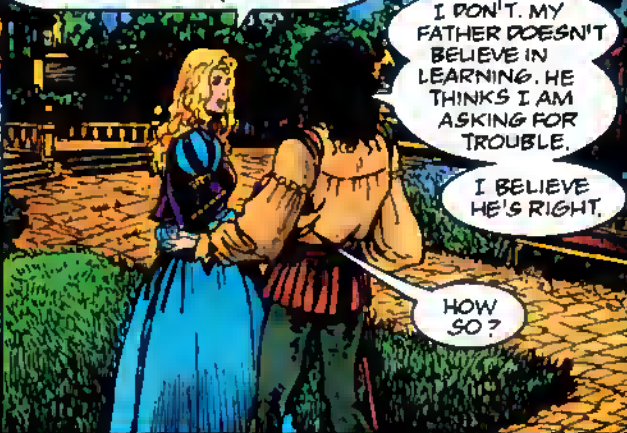
NONSENSE.  
IT *MUST* HAVE  
BEEN A  
NIGHTMARE!



I BELIEVED MY  
FATHER'S MAD PARADE  
WAS A NIGHTMARE, YET  
I NEVER FORGOT HIS  
WORDS AS HE CON-  
JURED HIS DEMON  
PARTNERS.

THOSE FEW WORDS,  
AND MY MEMORY OF  
THEM, WOULD LATER  
LAY THE GROUNDWORK  
FOR MY UNDOING.

WHEN DO YOU GO BACK TO  
THE UNIVERSITY, NICCOLO?

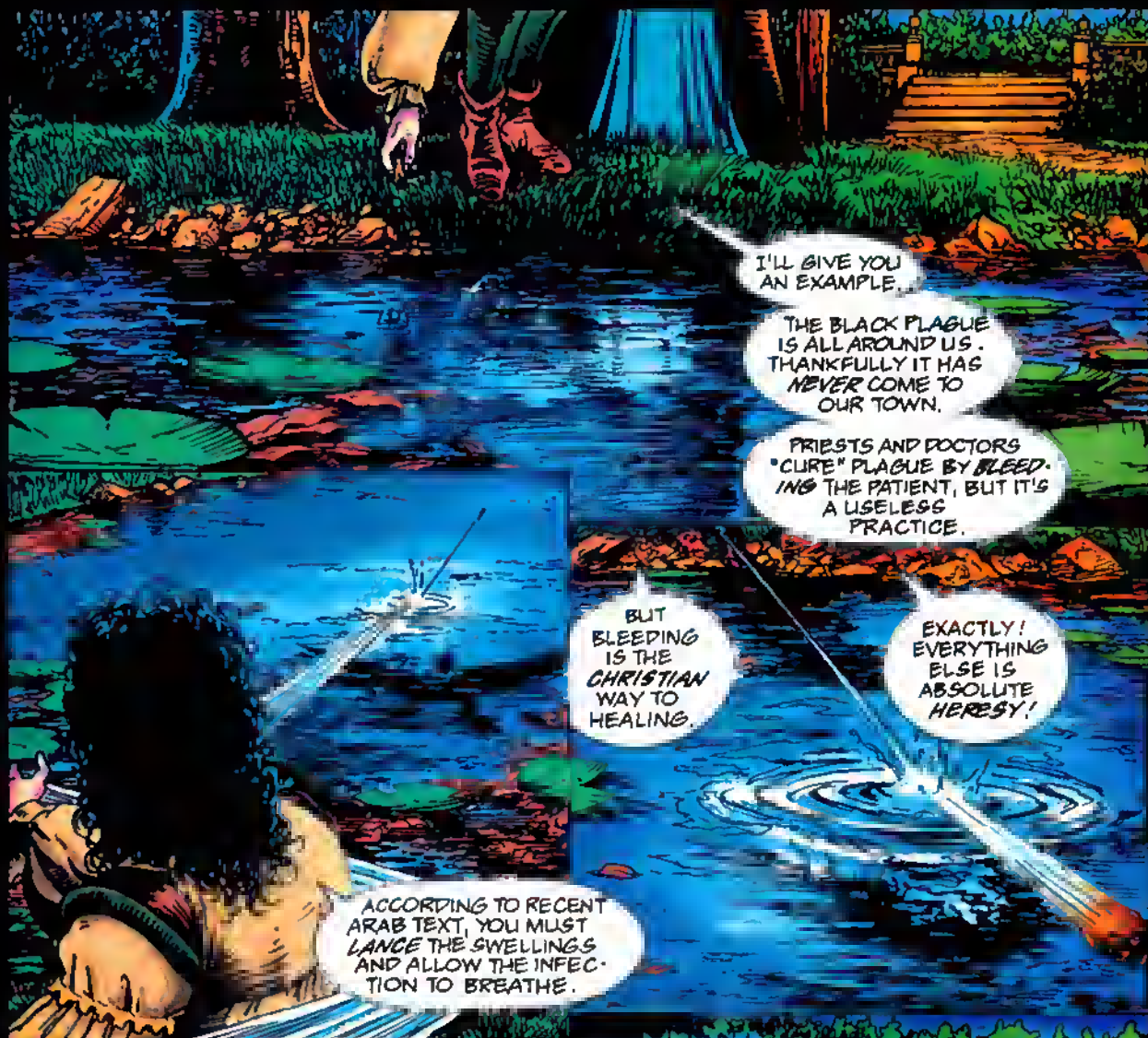


I DON'T. MY  
FATHER DOESN'T  
BELIEVE IN  
LEARNING. HE  
THINKS I AM  
ASKING FOR  
TROUBLE.

I BELIEVE  
HE'S RIGHT.

HOW  
SO?





I'LL GIVE YOU  
AN EXAMPLE.

THE BLACK PLAGUE  
IS ALL AROUND US.  
THANKFULLY IT HAS  
NEVER COME TO  
OUR TOWN.

PRIESTS AND DOCTORS  
"CURE" PLAGUE BY BLEED-  
ING THE PATIENT, BUT IT'S  
A USELESS  
PRACTICE.

BUT  
BLEEDING  
IS THE  
CHRISTIAN  
WAY TO  
HEALING.

EXACTLY!  
EVERYTHING  
ELSE IS  
ABSOLUTE  
HERESY!

ACCORDING TO RECENT  
ARAB TEXT, YOU MUST  
LANCE THE SWELLINGS  
AND ALLOW THE INFEC-  
TION TO BREATHE.

DO YOU SEE?! THIS  
IS NOT A TIME FOR  
THINGS THAT ARE  
NEW. TRUST ME,  
HOPE.


BUT ENOUGH OF  
THAT. WE DIDN'T  
COME HERE TO LEARN  
MEDICINE, MY LOVE



OUR TIME TOGETHER,  
NICOLO AND I,  
WAS BRIEF.



**MONTHS LATER.**




PREPARE! WE  
ARE OFF TO WAR!  
GATHER THE  
MENFOLKS!


BUT SIR,  
PLEASE! HE  
IS MY ONLY  
SON!




WE ALL MUST  
MAKE **SACRIFICES**  
TO THE REALM.



COME BOY! WE  
HAVE **MEN'S** WORK  
TO DO!



FATHER,  
NO!



DON'T YOU  
EVER CROSS ME  
IN FRONT OF THE  
PEASANTS! DON'T  
YOU EVER!





WE GO!

'BOUT  
HAD IT WITH  
MATTHIAS!

HE'S A LOU!  
'IS DAUGHTER  
AIN'T NO  
BETTER.

... NICCOLO...



I SHOULD  
HAVE THOUGHT  
ABOUT MY FATHER'S  
ACTIONS! I SHOULD  
HAVE REMEMBERED  
THE NIGHTMARE!

I WAS NAIVE.  
I DID NOT KNOW  
MATTHIAS' TRUE  
INTENT--  
SACRIFICING THE  
TOWNSMEN.



MY ONLY FRIEND DURING THAT COLD  
WINTER WAS AGNES, A MAID AT  
THE CASTLE. THE OTHER TOWNSPEOPLE  
REFUSED TO ASSOCIATE WITH ME.



IT WAS A RARE AND HAPPY TIME.  
AWAY FROM MATTHIAS, AWAY  
FROM HIS BRUTALITY.



THE POWER,  
THE GLORY, YES!  
THE EBB AND FLOW  
OF THE FALLEN  
LIFE! IT'S  
GLORIOUS!

DO YOU HEAR  
ME, PRINCES OF  
DARKNESS?!  
DO YOU?!

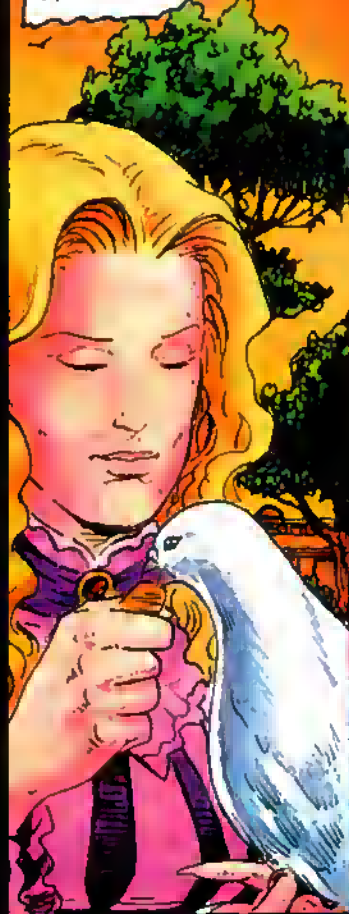
AIEEEE

UIGH!





WINTER GIVES  
WAY TO  
SPRING.



MATTHIAS?  
NICCOLO?



WHERE IS  
MY BOY?

BE CALM,  
GOOD  
PEOPLE.

I DON'T  
SEE HIM.



WHERE  
ARE OUR  
SONS,  
MATTHIAS?

WHERE  
IS MY  
BOY?



YOUR SONS ARE  
GONE. BUT THEY  
GAVE THEIR LIVES  
SO YOU MAY HAVE  
THESE RICHES!





WHERE IS  
HE? WHERE IS  
NICCOLO?!

HE TRIES  
TO BUY US--  
THE  
BASTARD!

IF I COULD, I  
WOULD *STAB* HIM,  
BUT HIS SOLDIERS...

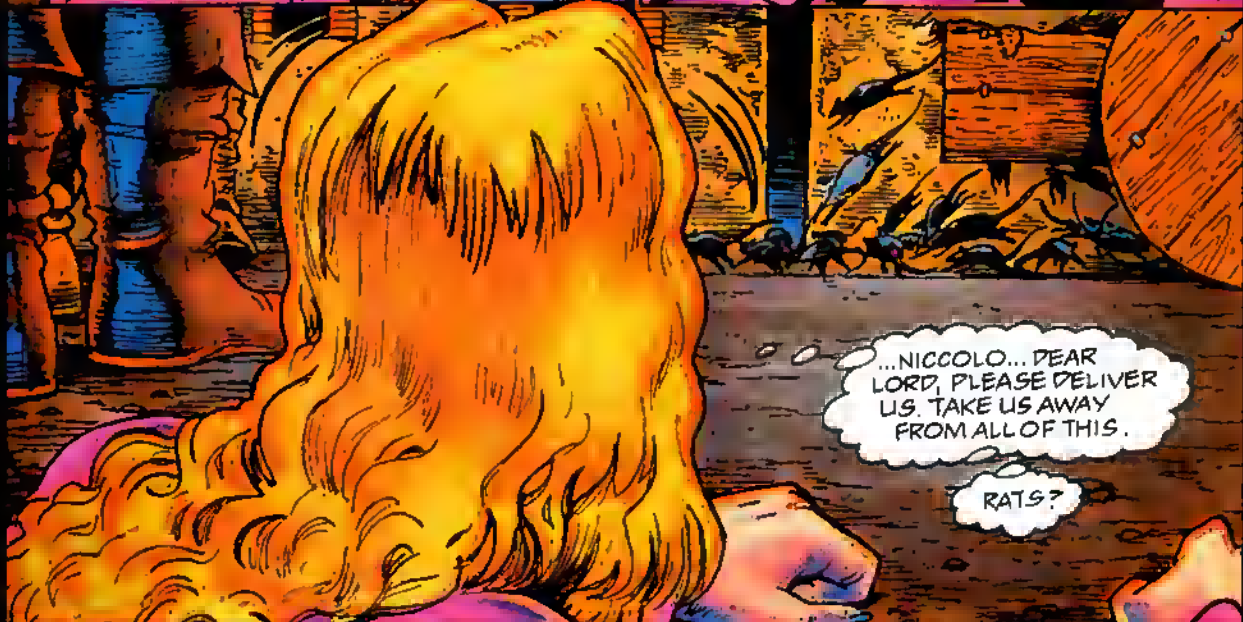
SOON, I THINK, MATTHIAS  
MUST ANSWER FOR HIS DEEDS.



NICCOLO?




HE WAS  
*USELESS* TO  
US AND THE  
FIRST TO  
DIE!



...NICCOLO... DEAR  
LORD, PLEASE DELIVER  
US. TAKE US AWAY  
FROM ALL OF THIS.


RATS?





THE RATS WERE A SIGN.  
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN,  
BUT MY MIND WAS CLOUDED.

CLOUDED BY  
DARKNESS.

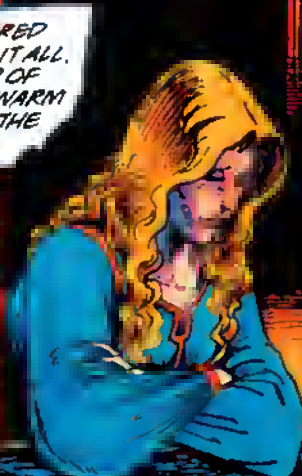


NOW, NOW.  
WHAT DO WE  
HAVE HERE?  
WHO'S LEAVING  
RUBBISH IN FRONT  
OF OLD AGNES'S  
DOOR?



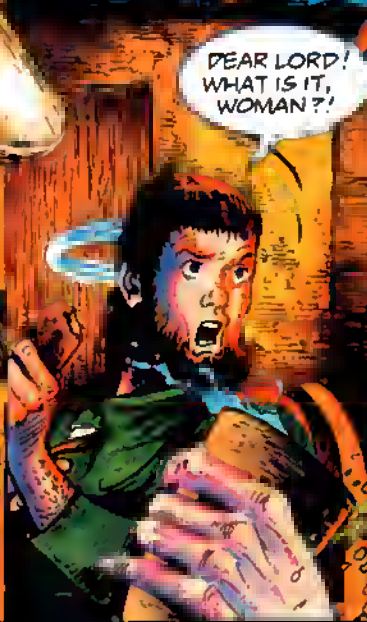
EEE-OOEWW!  
UNHOLY CREATURE!

I CONSIDERED  
ENDING IT ALL.  
I DREAMED OF  
DYING. THE WARM  
EMBRACE, THE  
SILENCE...



FIRST HE STOLE MY  
MOTHER, THEN  
NICCOLO. WHAT WAS  
LEFT FOR ME IN  
THIS LIFE?

DESPAIR.



DEAR LORD!  
WHAT IS IT,  
WOMAN?!



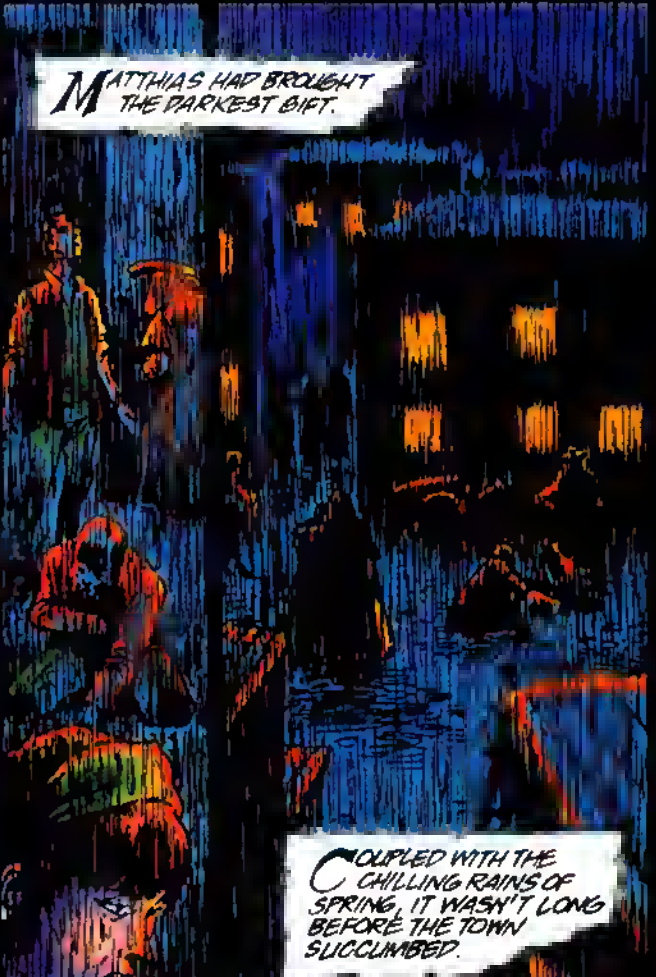
LUCK!





MATTHIAS HAD BROUGHT  
THE DARKEST BIFT.


THEY DIDN'T KNOW, I DIDN'T  
KNOW, THE PLAGUE WAS  
SPREAD BY FLEAS INFESTING  
THE RATS.



COUPLED WITH THE  
CHILLING RAINS OF  
SPRING, IT WASN'T LONG  
BEFORE THE TOWN  
SUGGLED.



NEWS CAME THAT AGNES  
WAS DEATHLY ILL  
FROM PLAGUE.




THERE IS  
LITTLE MORE  
WE CAN DO,  
FATHER  
HERMAN.

DEAR SISTER  
AGNES. SHE IS  
LOST TO US.

SHE IS IN  
GOD'S HANDS  
NOW, FATHER  
ORBEC.

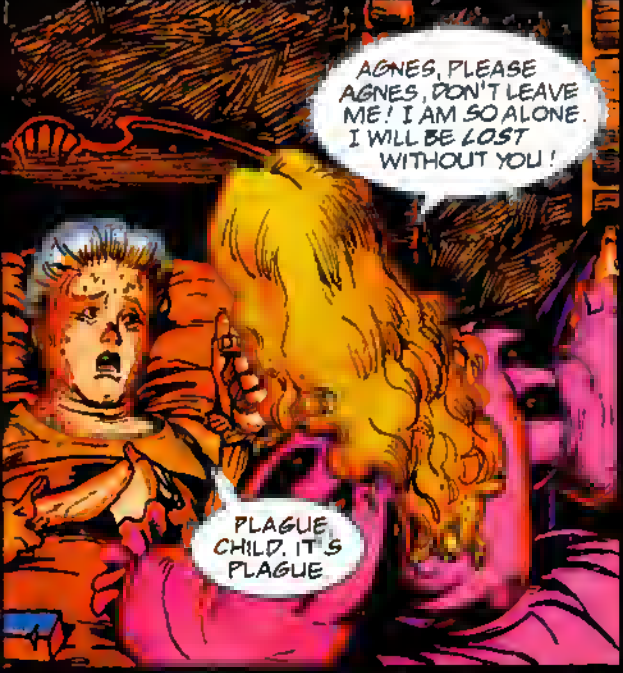




MILADY HOPE,  
IT IS LATE!

I CAME TO  
SEE AGNES. HOW  
DOES SHE FARE?

NOT  
WELL, CHILD.  
NOT WELL.



AGNES, PLEASE  
AGNES, DON'T LEAVE  
ME! I AM SO ALONE.  
I WILL BE LOST  
WITHOUT YOU!


PLAGUE  
CHILD, IT'S  
PLAGUE



BLEEDING IS  
USELESS! YOU  
MUST LANCE THE  
SWELLINGS!

GET CONTROL  
OF YOURSELF, GIRL!  
BLEEDING IS  
TRIED AND TRUE!

DON'T YOU  
UNDERSTAND?  
SHE IS MY ONLY  
FRIEND!



AGNES, I'LL STAY  
WITH YOU! I'LL MAKE  
YOU ALRIGHT! I  
WILL. I'LL MAKE  
YOU ALRIGHT!

THIS IS  
UNCHRISTIAN!  
I COMMAND  
YOU TO STOP  
THIS  
SECOND!



DON'T  
COME  
NEAR  
HER!

SHE IS  
POSSESSED!





NIGHT RELINQUISHES,  
AND GIVES WAY  
TO DAY.



I TOLD YOU  
I WOULD HELP  
YOU AGNES. I  
TOLD YOU YOU  
WOULD GET  
BETTER.

YOU ARE A  
GOD SEND  
CHILD.



WITCH!



HUMAN  
FOOLS!

AS IF MY  
SUFFERING  
WEREN'T ENOUGH!  
THEY PLANNED TO  
STEAL WHAT LITTLE  
PLEASURE I HAD.





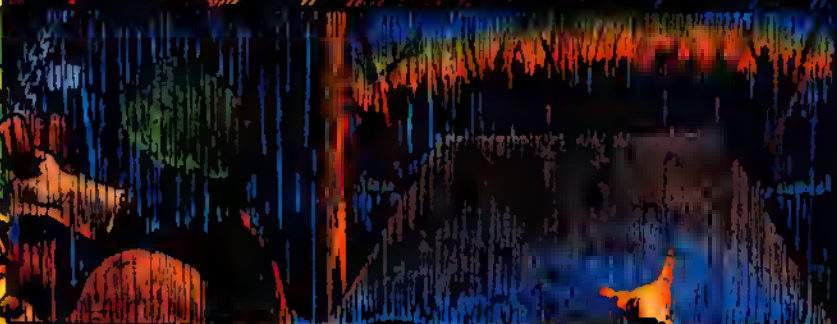




THAT'S RIGHT,  
PRINCES OF HELL,  
TAKE THESE  
SOLDIERS. MY  
SOLDIERS!



MATTHIAS!  
YOUR TIME  
HAS COME!



I WILL CONTROL  
THE POWER! I WILL  
USE IT TO CONQUER  
LUCIFER!



I WILL  
BE THE LORD  
OF HELL!





WHERE IS HE?!



HE'S IN HERE!

LOOK! DEMONS!



I CAN FEEL YOUR HATRED! GOOD!

HATE IS WHAT I NEED TO PASS TO THE NEXT PLANE!

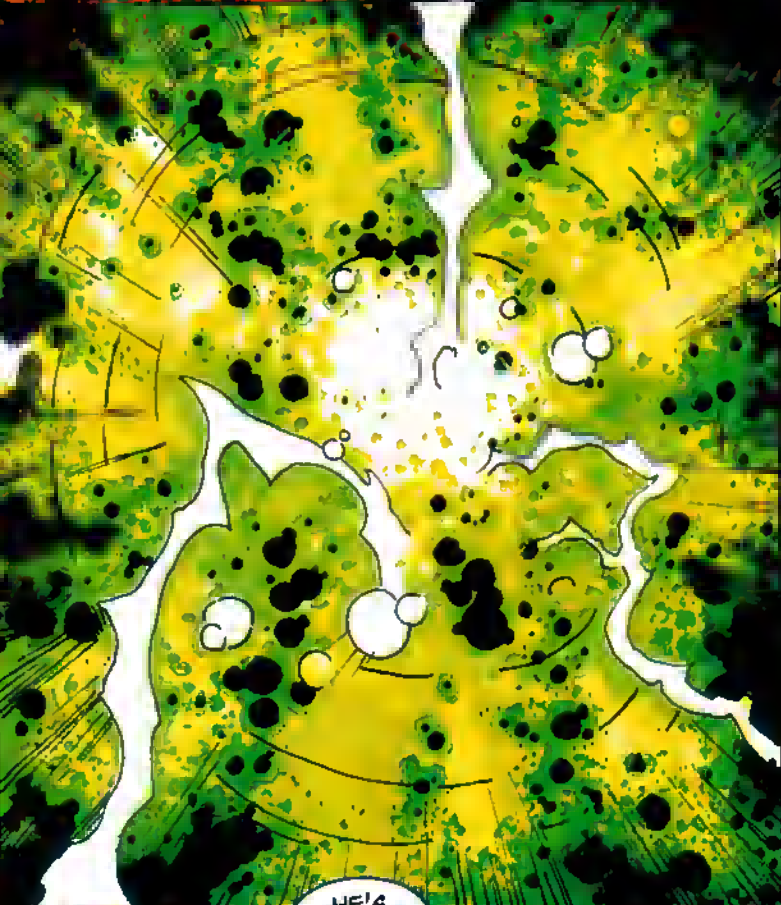
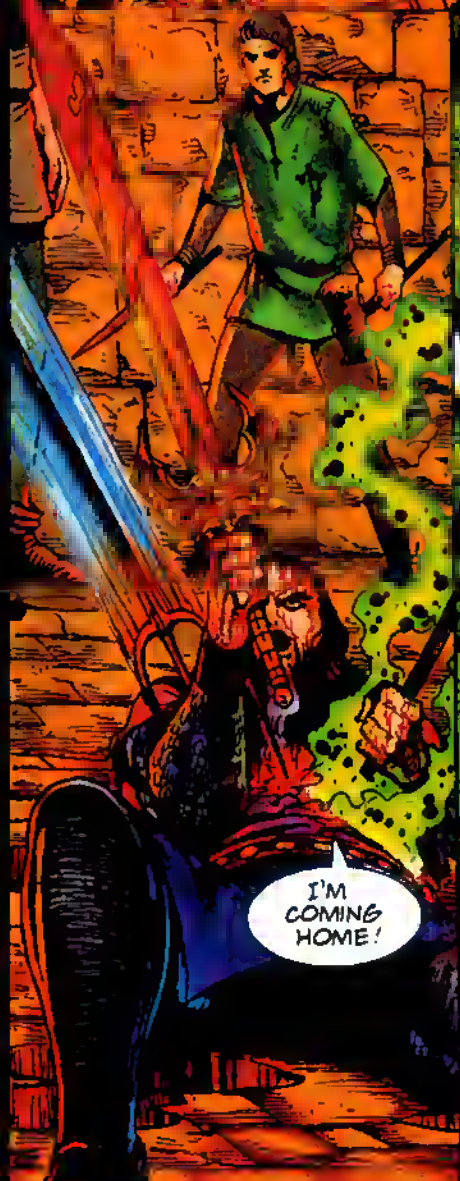


QUICKLY! BEFORE HE WILL THE DEMONS TO KILL US!




BAH! I DON'T NEED DEMONS TO DO MY WORK!









IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE  
THEY FOUND ME  
CRINGING IN A CORNER

**F**EAR. HOW  
PATHETIC.

FOR SINS OF YOUR  
FATHER AND SINS OF  
YOUR OWN, YOU  
WILL DIE  
TONIGHT!

BURN  
THE  
WITCH!

BURN!

BURN!

MY MUNDANE  
LIFE AS A HELP-  
LESS LITTLE  
GIRL WAS  
ABOUT OVER.

LITTLE DID I  
KNOW THAT DEATH  
WOULD BE THE LEAST  
OF MY PROBLEMS  
TO COME...

NEXT ISSUE:  
**DESCENT INTO HELL!**



NEXT  
ISSUE

"Descent Into Hell"





I've been asked to reflect on Lady Death's "life" for this tenth anniversary issue and the first thing that comes to mind is complete my amazement that she has flourished so long. My main intention when I created her was simply to tell a story. Everything else that's happened—and that's quite a lot of stuff—has been unexpected. How could someone predict the success Lady Death has had?



Lady Death first appeared in *Evil Ernie* #1 published in December 1991. Steven Hughes and I noticed that fans really responded to Lady Death prints we that were selling, so I decided to spin her off into her own series. I created a tale about a girl named Hope who becomes the female personification of death. Our colorist thought the story was too quiet, that it would bore readers. Honestly, I had no idea either way.

*Lady Death: The Reckoning* #1 came out in February 1994 and the results were explosive. Thanks to a magnificent cover by Steven Hughes and instant scarcity, the book was an over night sell-out and back issue prices soared. Demand for anything related to Lady Death went through the roof as the "bad girl" craze took off. I went from living in a studio apartment to running one of the top ten selling comic book companies in North America.

To meet the demand, we produced

trading card sets and swimsuit issues and more comics. It was a vertical learning curve. *Lady Death* #1 stayed on the *Wizard* top ten list for close to two years—a feat that has never been duplicated since.

As we unveiled new comics that set Lady Death in dark adventures against insidious foes, I pioneered wild cover enhancements that sky-rocked our sales further. I was inspired by Kiss. They were outrageous. I figured that to compete against the big guys I needed something that would grab attention away from them—and it worked. We made Velvet, leather, sculptured embossed and of course, chromium covers which drove fans wild. In her comics Lady Death fought Lucifer, Asteroth and Genocide and her odyssey took her to Hell, Asgard and other exotic locales.

In a ground-breaking agreement with Moore Action Collectibles, we unveiled the first Lady Death sculpture



and a line of cool action figures that give me goose bumps to this day. Of all the radical items we made with Moore, my favorite is the Lady Death snow globe which features bats in place of snow and plays Wagner's Flight of the Valkyrie. This was all Clay Moore and it is a brilliant design.

Licensing Lady Death became big business as we produced pogs, T-shirts, coasters, barware, prints, posters, busts, calendars, stickers and more. All that stuff was a lot of fun to make and be part of. Okay, maybe not the pogs. She had major crossover events with Harris Comics's Vampirella and Top Cow's Medieval Witchblade.

Through the years Lady Death has been illustrated by a mind-boggling array of world-class illustrators. For me, this has been the greatest reward. To name just a few: Steven Hughes, Ivan Reis, George Perez, Jim Balent, Joseph Linsner, Joe Jusko, Boris Vallejo, Julie Bell, Brom, Mark Silvestri, among hundreds of others. Imagine being a comics fan and having these folks illustrate your character and you get a hint of the experience of opening up a Fed Ex package and drooling over the art.

Fans and readers have embraced Lady Death, as they have no other character. Their passion has turned into customized cars, bikes, paintings, costumes and hundreds of tattoos proudly displayed on their bodies. I was taking a class at a local college recently and each person was asked to speak a bit about their background. When they got around to me, I mentioned that I wrote Lady Death. A gal turned around, pulled her top up and revealed a Lady Death tattoo on her back. Stuff like that never ceases to amaze me.

The comics market is set up for the big companies and super hero fans to succeed, so that we had any success at all has been fantastic. For a while there we really kicked the big guy's ass. I get a laugh out of that now and then.

Lady Death even survived the death of Chaos! Comics resurfacing at

CrossGen Entertainment. There she was reborn as a "mainstream" version of my saucy temptress targeted for readers of all ages. Amazingly, the story worked, fans gravitated toward it and Lady Death: a Medieval Tale was named Wizard's book of the month.

Recently the long promised Lady Death animated movie was released on DVD. I had a chance to see it premiere with a standing-room-only crowd in San Diego Comic Con. Honestly it was more than standing-room-only. They had to turn away three hundred people and set them up with another theater. I was pleased.

People can be really picky about this movie stuff, but I figure it took Marvel at least forty years to make a good movie, this Lady Death movie is a decent start. Who knows? Maybe a live action movie is in her future.

Speaking about the future, you may have heard that Lady Death has resurfaced yet again. Well it is true (it's hard to keep a good dead woman down). In 2005, Avatar Press will launch an all new Medieval Lady Death series, written by yours truly and—big drum roll here please—the original Lady Death will return as well (I'm writing that one too). I admit I've retooled her story a bit for 2005 readers, but rest assured, the essence of what she is about is all there—set in the dark ages, a girl named Hope renounces her humanity and becomes the pale skinned, female personification of death.

After a decade of Lady Death comics in print all over the world and close to fifteen million sold, I'm pleased to be in control of her destiny again and look forward to all the challenges and opportunities to come. If the next ten years is anything like the last ten years, I can only imagine what lies ahead.

A special thanks and shout out to Steven Hughes—your spirit and your creativity is greatly missed, my friend.

—Brian Pulido